

THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Primer on Inflation

by Robert Lekachman

Defense Facts and Fancies

by the Editors

Election Prospects for 1960

by Louis H. Bean

A Revival of "The Dial"

by J. M. Edelstein

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A Measure of Difference

★ Let us start at a specific detail and work back. The Eisenhower Administration advocates for education a long-term loan program costing \$5 million in 1961, compared with \$500 million proposed in the Senate bill, and \$4 billion a year recommended by the Democratic Advisory Council. That's quite a difference – \$5 million and \$4 billion.

Now let's turn to the growth problem. Allen Dulles, head of CIA (who can hardly be accused of partisanship), has testified that Soviet economic growth is twice ours and concentrated where it counts most. The Administration says don't worry; things will take care of themselves. But the majority of the Congressional Joint Economic Committee under Sen. Paul Douglas this week says no; "Our future growth will depend on what we do now," and we're not doing the right things.

Now let's look at space. Eisenhower says space exploration isn't a military matter at all; it's a civilian function. He says this condescendingly. But George V. Allen, head of the US Information Agency (who again can hardly be accused of partisanship), testified last week that the US is "falling short of world expectation," that other nations now universally regard the Soviet Union as preeminent in science and technology and that a cockiness is appearing among Communists which, if it "translates itself into adventuresomeness in foreign affairs" means that "the world is in for a good deal of trouble." (The carefully colorless phrases reveal the anxiety underneath.)

So now let's turn to economics. The Administration boasts that by doing nothing in the 1957-58 recession the thing solved itself. This contrasts with

Arthur F. Burns (formerly the President's own chief economic adviser) who proposed a tax cut. Well, the recession did cure itself all right. Like an untreated wound it caused a \$12.5 billion deficit (yes – \$12.5 billion, largest in peacetime history) which is partly responsible for inflation since.

You begin to see the pattern. The Administration does nothing; things cure themselves. The steel strike, for instance – the Administration kept hands off; result – an eight months' strike, worst in US industrial history.

Truman ejaculated that this is the worst Administration since Grant's. At first this sounds silly. The public currently gives Eisenhower a 71 percent popularity rating; surely it can't be so deceived? Humbly we confess we don't know. But isn't the time coming – hasn't it already come – when doing nothing is going to ruin us?

Look at the Record

★ A group of 17 distinguished scientists and technologists, including two Nobel Prize winners, mobilized by the Democratic Advisory Council, charges that the US is failing to meet the dangerously serious Soviet space challenge. They charge Eisenhower is "bewildered" by problems of space technology.

The layman gropes for a rational judgment. This reporter recently read again the whole batch of eight Eisenhower State of the Union messages starting with 1953. They are fraught with a really incredible – a naïve – optimism. He came to office thinking he could cut the annual budget to \$60 billion. In 1953 he announced hopefully he was unleashing Chiang Kai-shek. In 1954 he said that in world affairs "the precious intangible, the initiative, is becoming ours." In 1955 he called the free nations "collectively stronger." In 1956 he said "inflation has been halted." In 1957 he said that "the long slide in farm incomes has been halted."

What impression does this gradually build up? The question is relevant because now we have a new problem. Defense Secretary Thomas Gates has abruptly told Congress that our defense position is much better than previously supposed. He makes one of the most reassuring statements in months. He speaks just when criticism is mounting. Gates says that US and USSR capabili-

ties have not changed – our estimates here remain the same. What has changed is our estimate of *Soviet intentions*. We are safer, he says, because we can downgrade Soviet intentions. General Nathan Twining, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, follows this up with an implication that doubters are faintly unpatriotic. They are creating a discouraged, defeatist mood.

We Disagree

★ Well, this reporter thinks that on the basis of the evidence any reasonable man would have grave doubts. These are underlined by noting the Administration's real goal, emphasized in the three latest Eisenhower messages: Maximum production of private goods with minimum government intervention.

"As I understand an economy," Walter Lippmann quotes the classic utterance last year of Raymond Saulnier, chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisers, "its ultimate purpose is to produce more consumer goods." Saulnier added that while gross national product had "lagged" in recent years – "if you look at consumption – the thing which, as I say, I regard myself as being commissioned to maximize – you will find we have done better."

Let us say, quietly and solemnly, that we disagree with all this. If we had the say, our lonely voice would be lifted for a bigger, not smaller, budget; for more federal interference in the economy, not less; for taxes that would divert a larger, not a smaller, share of national income into public spending away from consumer goods, and a call – in time of peril – for national greatness through sacrifices, not wishful thinking.

Try-out for 1960

★ The \$100-a-plate Democratic banquet here was a 1960 preconvention try-out to compare seven candidates. Each did his best. Our score: Governor Pat Brown, prosaic and commonplace; Menen Williams, relaxed but hardly memorable; Governor Bob Meyner, Grade B; Lyndon Johnson, not at his best as platform speaker; Senator Symington, surprisingly good. Senators Humphrey and Kennedy were tops: Humphrey best projecting his power; Kennedy making the speech we shall remember longest – a call for a "strong" President.

Defense Facts and Fancies

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The renewed debate on the national defense, what with assertions and denials of "missile gaps" or "deterrent gaps" and charges and claims regarding the wisdom of relying upon estimates of enemy "intentions" rather than "capabilities," seems rather more confusing than ever this year. The President, who recently reminded us again that he knows more than most about such matters, indignantly rejects the accusation that the nation's security is being neglected for budgetary or other reasons. Yet a long series of independent studies, from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund Report and the report of the Gaither Committee in 1958 (it will be recalled that the latter was a group appointed by the President himself) down to those recently published by the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, has indicated that all is not well. It is a field of policy and of inquiry in which there are admittedly few certainties and consequently many questions upon which there may be legitimate differences of judgment. Nevertheless, there are a few points that can scarcely be disputed, and keeping these firmly in mind may render the unfolding debate at least partially intelligible.

First. The Eisenhower Administration cannot legitimately be charged with "losing" the predominant military position the United States enjoyed when it assumed office seven years ago. Every sober study of the revolution in military technology in recent years indicates that the highly favored "position of strength" the United States possessed then was a temporary one, which could only have been retained if the Soviet Union had lacked the industrial capacity or the will to build up its stocks of nuclear weapons and to provide itself with long-range delivery systems. To be sure, a few airpower enthusiasts have made the charge, but the ascertainable facts are against them.

The reason is that, in a real sense, absolute and not relative strength is the key to the equation of strategic power. As soon as the Russians were able to deliver a handful of A-bombs on US soil, the very high order of invulnerability to hostile military attack our homeland had enjoyed for more than a hundred years was gone forever. This they achieved probably even before 1953, though what we could do to them then was so much greater than what they could do to us that it was extremely unlikely they would attack us save as a very final resort indeed (i.e., if we attacked them first). Once the Russians were able to deliver a comparatively small number of H-bombs on our soil (say, from about 1955), the very concept of "predominant" military strength had lost its significance. This is the truth behind the saying, "it

doesn't matter how many times we can destroy them if they can destroy us just once." The *minimum* number of weapons necessary to "destroy" a great nation varies as a function of its defenses against such an attack and its ability to survive such an attack, for example, because it has adopted and carried out elaborate civil defense plans in advance. Nevertheless, there does seem to be such a minimum number, in all conceivable circumstances.

Second. The Administration can be charged, and of course has been charged (and not only by Democrats for "political" reasons), with failing to recognize in time the possibility that the strategic advantage could swing to the other side, and consequently of failing to make the necessary effort to prevent this from happening. This is the crux of the argument about the "missile gap" (which some Administration spokesmen seem to prefer to call the "deterrent gap"). The substance of the charge is a matter of judgment, which must be formed on a basis of information which cannot be certain, either for the Administration or its critics. However, the debate is deliberately obfuscated when official spokesmen answer the charge that we *are in danger of running into* a missile gap by saying there is no missile gap *now*.

Third. The missile gap is not simply a question of comparing numbers of US missiles as against USSR missiles. The last Secretary of Defense, Mr. McElroy, was quite correct when he said that a three-to-one Soviet superiority in ICBMs did not, of itself, spell great danger to the United States. For example, if the Russians have three ICBMs ready to go and we have one, the comparison is meaningless. Likewise, it *may* be unimportant when they have 300 if we have only 100. The point is that until we have a deterrent force based upon missiles *which are not subject to easy destruction in a surprise attack by Russian missiles*, we are dependent for our security upon a force of long-range bombers which *are* vulnerable to such an attack. General Thomas S. Power, Commander of the Strategic Air Command, said last week that with only 300 long-range missiles, only half of them ICBMs (*i.e.*, the remainder IRBMs with ranges of 1,500 miles or less), the Soviet Union "could virtually wipe out our entire nuclear strike capability within a span of 30 minutes."

No one seems to believe the Russians have that force of missiles yet. Mr. Gates, the present Secretary of Defense, *seems* to be saying that though they *could* create such a force, he is confident they do not plan to do so. At any rate, *he* is clearly not planning to assure the United States a deterrent force that could not be wiped out in a surprise attack by such a force, any time soon. It will be several years before we shall have a sufficient force of "hardened" ICBMs (Atlases and Titans in underground concrete silos) and Polaris IRBMs in sub-

marines to give assurance that if the Russians did launch a surprise attack, enough of our strategic forces would survive to make them pay dearly for their temerity.

That is what the predicted "missile gap" amounts to: not the bare superiority in numbers of Soviet over US missiles, but the possibility that Soviet missiles may nullify our deterrent force of bombers before our deterrent force of missiles is ready. General Power and others (including presumably Mr. Gates) believe that when the missile gap is actually upon us we can evade it by at all times keeping a larger number of our bombers aloft, where they cannot be destroyed in a surprise attack. The Administration has also said that there are so many other ways of delivering nuclear weapons upon Russian targets (meaning, presumably, by "tactical" aircraft from NATO airfields and by IRBMs stationed in Europe, and from the Navy's carriers), that the total number of targets the Russians must destroy is actually much larger than the figure of "only about one hundred" which General Power mentioned. Consequently, the Russians will not be justified in feeling confident that they can get all – or enough – of these to pull off a successful surprise attack, when they have 300 missiles or even more than 300. At the same time, the Administration is obviously not happy about the risks it is running. It justifies them by saying that we must avoid overinvesting in the first generation of ICBMs, hence must rely upon makeshifts to bridge the gap until the later missiles (such as the Air Force's Minuteman and the Navy's Polaris) are ready.

Fourth. On the vexed question of preparedness for "limited" war, and consequently of deterring the Communists from resorting to peripheral or otherwise limited military actions, it is, of course, a fact that the United States and its allies do have quite considerable capacity to defend themselves without resorting to thermonuclear war. The issue of the debate is whether we have enough, whether the forces provided for this purpose reflect the gravity of the threat or are merely what can be supported under an arbitrary budget ceiling when the first priority is given to strategic forces.

Fifth. There seems to be not a shadow of doubt that the mere existence of nuclear weapons, strategic and "tactical," increases the risk of war and thereby makes nations more reluctant to resort to war. Moreover, no expanding power can ever be entirely certain what the victims of its expansion will do – when, for example, they will resort to arms. The Russians, then, cannot be *certain* that if they attack one of our allies we would not (1) use "tactical" nuclear weapons in defense, or even (2) launch a thermonuclear retaliation. Thus, there is no question that there is substance to the policy of deterrence based on the threat of retaliation with nuclear weapons. The question is how much substance is there

in the various situations that might conceivably confront us, and consequently how heavily can we rely upon deterrence to save us from having to decide between yielding to aggression (or intimidation) and making the decision to initiate a nuclear war?

It is because reluctance to risk war is not a guarantee that military force will never be used that it is argued the United States must have the means to resist without initiating a nuclear war. It is also true that the possibility that we might do so actually decreases the chance of a nuclear war arising as a consequence of military threats to our interests and thereby at least marginally increases the chance that war of some kind may arise.

This is the source of the debate between those who believe, as the President seems to, that we should deliberately increase the likelihood of any war that comes being a nuclear war, in order to minimize the probability of war, and those who believe that we must contemplate wars of less-than-total destructiveness to avoid being disastrously weakened by our own fear of such wars.

In substance, throughout the defense debate, the issues turn on questions of judgment concerning the confidence to be attached to admittedly incomplete information regarding Soviet capabilities and admittedly hazardous estimates of Soviet intention. In other words, how much risk we are willing to take, remembering that any degree of risk is unpleasant since the stakes are so extraordinarily high and that a margin of safety is greatly to be preferred to a margin of risk.

Paying for the Public Debt

One of the few arguments the Treasury lost last year with a supine Congress was its effort to repeal legislation which placed a 4¼ percent interest ceiling on long-term government bonds. This year, Secretary Anderson is back to the charge once more. In a recent speech, he maintained that the burden of the national debt was heavier because the Treasury was compelled to borrow only at short term, at a time when long-term lenders could invest their funds more profitably in mortgages and other securities. Because of this limitation on the Treasury, business borrowers had to pay higher rates also, and Treasury financing needlessly cluttered the capital markets because of the constant necessity to refund maturing debt. Almost anyone might sympathize with the Secretary when it is realized that in the next 12 months more than \$84 billion of federal bonds will mature and the Treasury will be obliged to sell equivalent amounts in the open market.

How the economists of the American Economic Association, to which these remarks were addressed, responded we do not know. But in the past Secretary Anderson's position has won the support of most responsible experts in the field of debt management. The

major argument is comparatively simple: the proper role of the Federal Reserve System is to make money scarce when inflation threatens and to make it plentiful when recession impends. It can scarcely operate unhampered if it must take care that Treasury bond issues find ready buyers, for it must provide the funds which enable purchases to be made. Therefore, the less frequently the Treasury has to appeal to the money market, the more smoothly monetary policy will work. This is the argument for lengthening the structure of debt maturities which the Eisenhower Administration has often promised and never performed.

In this specific instance, however, there are good reasons to challenge the cogency of the general analysis. Despite appearances, Congress was not succumbing to a fit of economic illiteracy when it refused to lift the interest ceiling. Instead, it was registering the only judgment that was, as a practical matter, within its political power on the monetary policies of the Federal Reserve System and of the Treasury which has been working so closely with it.

Many Congressional liberals are convinced that recent monetary policy has curtailed economic growth, needlessly enlarged unemployment, and missed the real causes of inflation, which have more to do with the pricing policies of our oligopolists than with the rate of interest. Rep. Chester Bowles expressed that sentiment last week in a letter to Speaker Rayburn: "In my opinion the single most costly economic blunder of recent years has been this Administration's success in curbing economic expansion. A key element in their program has been the raising of interest rates [which] has added substantially to the cost of all new business expansion, home financing, and all automobiles, furniture and consumer durables bought on time."

When Congress refused to raise long-term interest rates on government securities, it indicated its resentment against policies which bore most heavily upon consumers, small businessmen, and local and state governments. Since the Federal Reserve System is an independent agency, Congress can affect its policies only by a major legislative battle or by such warnings as this one. In plain speech, Congress has told the Administration that interest rates are too high for the health of the economy. At the same time, it has seen no reason to allow the Treasury to reward investors with artificially high interest rates over the entire life of a long-term government bond. Congress appears to believe that when the Federal Reserve System repents of its sins, interest rates will fall enough so that the Treasury can borrow all that its heart desires at 4¼ percent or less.

No doubt this is an awkward way to make an economic point, but Congress has no other way of emphasizing a position which has a good deal more to recommend it than the cautious, restrictive timidity of the ruling monetary authorities.

Remember the Ramrod

The report of the Seventeen Scientists empanelled by the Democratic Advisory Committee alleges that the Russian space program has been given a deceptively pacific look because it is controlled and operated by the Russian Academy of Sciences, with the Army, Navy and Air Force merely assisting.

But why should civilian control of the program deceive anyone? New and more powerful weapons are usually developed by civilians. Fermi and Szilard, of the atom bomb, were civilians; so were Garand, of the army rifle; Stokes, of the trench mortar; Browning, of the automatic rifle; Gatling, of the first practical machine gun; and Colt, of the revolver.

Commenting some years ago on the lethal genius of the civilian, H. L. Mencken asserted that with one exception every notable advance in weaponry for the past five centuries has been a civilian contribution. The exception is the ramrod, said to have been invented by a general serving Frederick the Great; but this Mencken chose to doubt on the ground that the ramrod is too complicated a mechanism to have been invented by the military mind.

Be that as it may, the Russian practice of leaving science under the control of scientists does not mean that its teeth are drawn. On the contrary, it may be deadlier than when it is made an adjunct to three quarreling branches of the armed forces.

Deterioration in Laos

Laos has dropped out of the headlines, but the news is still there, and it is that little progress is being made toward some degree of political stability as a prelude to coping with the Communist problem. On the contrary, if they have patience enough to wait, the Communists seem likely to get the country by default. And this, in spite of a UN fact-finding mission, the visit of Mr. Hammarskjöld, the delivery of a fair amount of US economic and military assistance and SEATO's benevolent concern for Laotian independence.

Prime Minister Phoui Sananikone, whose resignation was accepted by the king at the end of the year, can claim, uniquely, some positive achievements during his 20 months in office. He broke the demoralizing currency racket and put an end to some of the more vicious graft and corruption associated with the American aid program. He got tough with the Communist Pathet Lao leaders, first by throwing them out of the government and later by clapping them in jail. He switched from his predecessor's neutralism to a vigorous pro-Western policy. And he took some steps toward turning the rabble of an army into a fighting force.

These acts brought strong reaction from the rebel Pathet Lao, with the results so dramatically expressed

in the fighting in the Northern provinces between July and September of last year. In the aftermath of that crisis, the West was not optimistic enough to believe that it could help create a government capable of quickly taking over the effective administration of the whole country. What it looked for and encouraged was the establishment of a cohesive, if extremely limited, administration capable of meeting the rebel challenge in areas not too deeply infected by Communist subversion.

These plans have gone awry. They did not take into full consideration the lack of administrative talent and skills. Men with the ability to become Cabinet Ministers are so few that any new government necessarily means only a reshuffle. The strength or weakness of personalities is more important than policy. And thus, though Prime Minister Phoui and the right-wing Committee for the Defense of the National Interest are united by a common purpose, they are divided on personal issues and methods. Unfortunately for Laos – and for those who regard as necessary its continued existence as a sovereign state outside the Communist orbit – Phoui Sananikone is perhaps the only acceptable and responsible leader available. His break with the “committee” is therefore a national misfortune.

For Southeast Asia it may prove even more serious than that. The “committee” members like to be known as the “Young Turks.” They are capable equally of precipitating another major crisis by repressive action in the provinces, and, at the other end of the scale, of inviting neutralist Prince Souvanna Phouma to return from his post as ambassador to France to make a deal with his Pathet Lao brother, Prince Souphanouvong. In any event, the prospects for stability are not bright. The Pathet Lao will not take kindly to national elections, whether they are held in April (as first announced) or in November. And even the dictatorship toward which the country seems to be heading is unlikely to improve the country's security. To succeed, a dictatorship must have strength; and with the possible exception of the Pathet Lao, whose following derives in large part from the failure of the Royal Government, there is little strength anywhere in Laos today.

Dictatorship in Ghana?

It is puzzling that the *Readers' Digest*, with all the resources at its disposal, should publish so incredibly lopsided an account of political trends in Ghana as appears in the December issue. The villain, by the *Digest's* account, is Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah, who emerges as very close to a black version of Hitler. Pitted against him in this struggle between good and evil is the “courageous publisher” of Ghana's principal opposition newspaper, a man who, we are told, “honed his conscience on Methodist concepts of civic responsibility” in mis-

sion schools. The question which the piece leaves unanswered is how Editor Tsiboe's *Ashanti Pioneer* is able to continue its day-in-day-out attacks on the government if "the constitution is in shreds, the parliamentary system a mockery," and Dr. Nkrumah's rule largely "totalitarian."

It is quite true that, in an American or British sense, Ghana is not today a flourishing democracy. On the other hand, it is neither a dictatorship nor a police state. The truth lies somewhere between.

There is no argument about the fact that almost all effective power in the country is centered in Nkrumah's Convention Peoples' Party, which controls all but 19 of the 103 seats in Parliament, uses patronage openly and freely to manipulate local situations and solidify its support, and has in the past few years effectively organized Ghana's farmers, labor force and youth into associations primarily beholden to the party rather than to the nation. But elections remain noisy, free and secret; there are no restrictions on the right of opposition parties to exist; and critics of the government enjoy a very high degree of freedom of speech and press. An American journalist who recently attended some sessions of the Ghana Parliament observed that few governments with the power possessed by the CPP would put up with the vicious harangues mounted against it daily.

While both the carrot and the stick have been employed in characteristically open African fashion to build and solidify CPP support, they are not the primary sources of Nkrumah's power. The CPP was, until independence in 1956, the country's militant independence movement, and Nkrumah was the catalyst. To a very large extent, the Prime Minister has convinced Ghanaians that the task of nailing down political and economic independence is unfinished, and that the CPP is still engaged in a national crusade. The political foe is no longer Britain, but the centrifugal forces of tribalism in Ghanaian society. (This is not a contrived emergency, for Nkrumah's government has faced a very serious threat to the whole concept of a national state from among the tribal leaders who, under the British system, were allowed a high degree of local autonomy and were not anxious to turn their power over to a central government. Only weeks before independence, the entire Ashanti tribal community came near to seceding, a move which was only staved off by British intervention. By now, through a series of laws enacted by the CPP-dominated Parliament over the past four years, the tribal leaders have been stripped of all but symbolic power, though tribal feeling still runs high on this issue in some areas.) Above all, any evaluation of the power of the regime must take into full account the sheer force of Nkrumah's charismatic personality and administrative skill. He has offended some of Ghana's intellectuals by encouraging hero-worship among the populace – his picture is on Ghana's coins, stamps and in every public

building – but his personal appeal as the father of modern Ghana remains substantially undiluted.

Because the CPP represents almost everyone constructively interested in the development of Ghana as a modern state, the opposition United Party has had to draw most of its support from tribal groups who oppose the CPP for the simple reason that they don't want a centralized government at all. The opposition is united in name only and is primarily concerned with "getting the rascals out" rather than offering a constructive substitute program. The rallying cry is "democracy," but exactly what democracy would mean under the disparate United Party is not clear. In short, the opposition is – to quote the London *Economist* – "badly organized, politically often foolish, to say the least, and on the whole incoherently led."

This opposition, frustrated and desperate, is now convinced that it can never come to power by peaceful means. The government charges that this frustration has led to some desperate planning. An alleged assassination plot against the Prime Minister in December, 1958, has never been taken to court, but an inquiry commission headed by a British judge last year concluded that a plot of "revolutionary character" did indeed exist and that two opposition MPs, now imprisoned, were largely responsible. Although the United Party contends that the whole plot was a figment of the government's imagination and an excuse for subsequent restrictive legislation, most Western observers in Ghana are convinced that there was substance to the government accusations. In any case, it is a hard fact that one of the principal leaders of the opposition came to Washington last year and toured agencies of the US government openly asking for the wherewithal to unseat the regime. It was this increasingly desperate note in opposition tactics which provided the government with its justification for the controversial Preventive Detention Act passed in 1959, under which 59 persons are now detained for periods of up to five years.

On the surface, this looks pretty hopeless. But the nuance most often missed by foreign observers of the Ghanaian scene is that the effective opposition in this country lies within the Convention People's Party itself. The governing party is, in fact, a national coalition of diverse viewpoints, bound together by their common concern with establishing Ghana's national identity and economic security. Nkrumah is far more sensitive than is generally recognized to the wide assortment of convictions within his cabinet – which range from conservative capitalists to radical socialists. His role is that of conciliator and arbiter rather than dictator. Moreover, the workers and farmers organized under CPP auspices are not rubber stamp organizations; their gatherings have a distinctly town meeting air, and sentiments critical of government policy or of members of the government are freely voiced. It is significant that almost all of

the sizable number of British subjects employed in technical and advisory capacities since independence are stout defenders of Dr. Nkrumah's motivations and governing skill. The appointment of the Ghana Prime Minister as the first African member of Queen Elizabeth's Privy Council last summer would suggest that the British Government is also convinced that his heart is in the right place.

Prime Minister Nkrumah's view of his task might be compared to that of Kemal Ataturk in the early days of the Turkish Republic: the constitutional framework should be democratic and the goal should be full democracy, but there is no point in inviting chaos by bringing all the cast onstage until they've had time to learn their roles and feel part of the company. In Turkey, which

began its era of republicanism under a regime with far more authoritarian controls than Dr. Nkrumah has instituted in Ghana, a working democracy has emerged. In Ghana, the bulk of informed opinion is convinced that — as independence, national unity and the country's economic underpinnings become more secure — the Convention People's Party will spawn its own responsible opposition. There are already substantial, well-led factions, both to the right and left of Dr. Nkrumah, who talk fairly openly from time to time of breaking away. In the interim, there seem to be a great many other areas in Africa more deserving of our disapproval than Ghana. For, measured against the emerging leadership pattern on this awakening continent, Dr. Nkrumah looks increasingly like a moderate conservative.

A RETRIAL IN NASHVILLE

"The Boy Is So Young"

Joseph Henry Westmoreland is a moon-faced, 12-year-old Negro boy who lives in Nashville and whose recent experience in the courts illustrates far better than many headlines some of the subtle changes taking place in the South. Last summer on a Sunday, Westmoreland went to church, then roamed around a white neighborhood, and then impulsively and brutally raped a 7-year-old white girl.

Westmoreland's father is an amputee who is unemployed, his mother sometimes works as a maid in a white home, he has six brothers and sisters, and he is poor. In court he was represented by a white lawyer, one who makes an unspectacular living handling routine cases, often those of Negroes. The details of the case were rough, and Westmoreland's counsel wasn't much better. As the district attorney said: "The jury got inflamed." Indeed it did: When the DA asked for 25 years for rape, the jury considered and then made it 35. "I talked to the men on that jury," said an attorney, "and there were several of them who wanted to give that boy 50 years."

Westmoreland was sent off to the Negro reformatory. Meanwhile things began to happen. A young Negro minister asked Mrs. Westmoreland if she were interested in pursuing the case. She was. He then went to see Z. Alexander Looby, a Negro attorney, to see if he were interested. Looby studied the case, noted points that had not been brought out, and said he was. This was the turning point. Looby is about as much the opposite of the stereotype of a Tennessee Negro as anyone could be.

Basically he is an aristocrat. He was born in the West Indies, has practiced law in Nashville for most of his life, is a member of the city council (with the reputation as the smartest man on it).

Looby got Westmoreland a second trial. At the same time social workers and juvenile workers interested the *Nashville Tennessean* in the case. Although the case received little publicity in Nashville, it was news in parts of the world where color is an even bigger issue than in Tennessee. Someone in South Africa wrote Alfred Friendly, managing editor of *The Washington Post*. Friendly wrote Bill Churchill, managing editor of the *Tennessean*. The week before the trial a *Tennessean* reporter called up all the interested parties in the case, asking routine questions that were not nearly so important as the fact of the call itself. The day of the trial, Looby turned all the pressure he could on the DA's office. When he was through, he suggested the newspaper reporter, too, visit the DA. "It's a tough case," said the DA, a wavering little man. "It's a terrible brutal crime. And yet the boy is so young. What do you think? . . ."

By the time the case again got into court most of the work was done. The entire proceedings took 15 minutes. Looby spoke 10 words, all about the boy's youth. There before the all-white, all-male jury, the DA described the crime. At one point he read from the boy's post-rape statement: "I had done this lots of times with other girls." Quickly the white defense attorney interposed: "Westmoreland meant little Negro girls, not raping

white girls. We don't think the first jury understood this." It was an important statement: it indicated a sloppy defense in the first trial, but it also indicated some of the emotional undercurrents in the desegregation controversy. The jury sat there, heard all the brutal

sexual details of the case, and then granted the District Attorney's plea to reduce the sentence to 10 years. "I don't think," said defense counsel Looby afterwards, "we could have done this a few years ago."

DAVID HALBERSTAM

REPORT FROM MOSCOW AND WARSAW

The Moods of Two Cities

The journey from Moscow to Warsaw is only 715 miles, 24 hours by express train across the icy Eurasian plain. You speed over the white flatness, past clumps of birch forest, and bare patches of brown earth, past frozen cottages and low fences which know no international border. But at journey's end you find you have left one world and entered another.

At one end lies Moscow, a hodge-podge of shabby post- and pre-revolutionary buildings which sprawl along spoke-like streets radiating from the central Kremlin. At the other is Warsaw, still scarred with war, whole areas – like the Jewish Ghetto – heaps of rubble, others – disguised with half-completed buildings. Only one section, the "Old City," meticulously rebuilt to plan, rises in its Middle-Age and Renaissance splendor to recall the past.

Beneath these visages beat two different hearts. Moscow is heavy; Warsaw, light. A Victorian puritanism hangs over the Soviet capital, suffocating its social life with too few restaurants and dull cafes. In Warsaw, the coffee houses have returned to prewar prominence. Their modernity dabs the ruins with a touch of life. Day and night sophisticated city-dwellers discuss whatever they like with whomever they like.

In Moscow everyone cries progress when the first acceptable American film – *Marty* – is finally included in the local circuit. More progress, they cry, when an American ballet troop and *My Fair Lady* are scheduled to arrive at the Bolshoi Theater. In Warsaw, at the end of December, 17 out of 62 cinemas featured American films, 28 others played other Western films. Warsawians have become positively blasé about the variety and number of Western cultural imports they have seen during the past three years.

But these are only surface phenomena. The real contrast between the two capitals comes in the mood of their people. In Moscow it is optimism; in Warsaw, pessimism. In Moscow, people are confident with growing prosperity, world-acclaimed scientific achievements, and

the slow but steady movement toward more freedom. In Warsaw people are apprehensive. They have freedom, but it is more *de facto* than *de jure*. No one is satisfied, neither the Communists who preside over the dismantled totalitarian state, nor the people who want more freedom but fear they will soon lose what they have.

This difference in spirit struck me forcefully in two conversations – one just before leaving Moscow; the other, shortly after arriving in Warsaw. The first was with a young Russian woman, the second with a young Polish man. They were approximately the same age, but they portrayed two alien worlds.

"You just cannot imagine how much has changed here," began Natasha. "In 1953 you could have given me \$10 million and I would not have sat with a foreigner. I could have been in love and still refused to meet him."

We sat in a Moscow restaurant near the Belorussian Station. The train would leave in a few hours. Outside the thermometer read – 30 degrees Centigrade; inside, overworked radiators, clinking glasses and a zealous orchestra enlivened the company.

"You can only live so long without trust," said Natasha. "How can you always be suspicious? It slowly drives you mad."

"Of course we have no democracy here. It is true. No one controls the higher organs of power. But we do not care. Let Khrushchev do what he wants. On the lower levels things begin to move."

"You should hear what goes on at local party meetings on Thursdays and Saturdays. The way members criticize the Secretaries! It is fantastic. Now the Party Secretary must keep his doors open to non-Communist complaints as well. Before they were closed. . . ."

"The funny thing is," she paused for emphasis, "people have been told for so long that property and society belong to them that they demand more and more from the State. They feel they have the right."

Natasha was one of those enlightened young Russians one meets more and more frequently. They are loyal

steals without conscience. Decentralization was to be the magic solution, but all it really means is that local Soviet citizens, they are socialists, but they are also liberals who recognize freedom for what it is. And they recognize that Gomulka's Poland has far more freedom than they have ever known. Therefore, Natasha could not hide her bitterness: "The Polish experiment in 'half-freedom' has failed. The Poles do not know how well off they are. They must have all or nothing. . . . Well . . . they will have nothing!"

Two nights later in the ultra-modern bar of the Hotel Bristol, Warsaw, I recalled those words. The vivid abstractions spotlighted on the wall, thick purple carpet, black marble-topped bar and high stools produced the touch of Westernism the Poles so cherish.

"We have had our little thaw, now we shall taste a little of the screw again," mused Bolek, the young actor beside me. "Why?" I asked.

"Simple," he answered, "this system just does not work. Oh yes, we are better off than we were three years ago, but do not be deceived by that. 'More discipline, more controls'," he suddenly mimicked Mr. Gomulka at the Central Committee meeting last autumn. "Why do you think we need more controls? Because no one respects the government whose inefficiency has us trapped. They own the wealth, so everyone cheats and

people violate the central plan openly now instead of under cover as before."

Bolek and others like him admit that nothing dramatic has happened. Three Stalinist administrators have been brought back to resurrect central control in the inflated economy. Work norms are to be raised; rigged overtime premiums reassessed. Private peasants (85 percent of Polish agriculture) are to be lured into the voluntary village "circles" with bigger and better tractors. Western cultural imports are to be diminished, but it has not happened yet. Police terror is still achieved – "After all, Gomulka suffered as much as anyone under Stalinism," is usually the clinching Communist argument.

But people seem to be waiting. They are wary of the new party line. A Communist journalist laid it out for me: "No socialist country can lead the Soviet Union. In October, 1958, we went too far ahead. Now we must go back to more controls, while the Soviet Union goes forward to more freedom. Once the two meet, the Russians can lead, we shall follow."

That reasoning might impress Natasha, but not the Poles. They know what any visitor to Moscow and Warsaw can confirm: It will be a long, long time before Soviet (and not only Soviet) Communists understand, let alone accept, what the Poles mean by freedom.

GEORGE SHERMAN

LOUIS H. BEAN ON ELECTION PROSPECTS FOR 1960 – III

The Marginal Congressmen

If the party in power normally tends to lose 25-30 seats in mid-term Congressional elections and tends to gain as many in a successful Presidential election, is it possible to anticipate how many and which particular seats are likely to change their political color this election year?

Political strategists commonly start with an examination of the latest election results, especially in those marginal Congressional districts where the successful candidates won by no more than 50 to 55 percent of the two-party vote. For 1960 this means scrutinizing about 102 districts, 45 in which Democrats won with less than 5 percent margins in 1958, and 57 in which Republicans won by the same narrow margins. This, however, does not mean that the chances are about even that approximately the same number of Republican marginal seats will be captured by Democrats as Democratic seats by Republicans. At this preconvention stage

when Democratic Congressional candidates don't know whose Presidential coat-tail will be available to them, it is necessary to recognize that the Republicans are the party in power and that it is the 45 Democratic marginal seats that bear the greater risk. After the conventions have chosen their candidates it may be possible to indicate whether the prospect of a Democratic Presidential victory minimizes the risk faced by these 45 marginal seats or whether the prospect of a Republican Presidential victory increases that risk.

The chance of defeat, of course, is not the same for each of the marginal Democratic Congressman. In the first place 11 of the 45 won by rather comfortable margins (53-54 percent) the other 34 won by narrower margins (50-52 percent). And some of the marginal Democratic victors in 1958 seem to have an extra advantage in that they represent districts in which there has been a continuous Democratic uptrend from 1952 through

1958. Nearly half of all the marginal Democratic Congressmen (19 out of 45) fall in this class.

Their average experience is indicated in this simple tabulation:

<i>19 Selected Congressional Districts</i>	
<i>Won by Democrats in 1958</i>	
<i>With 50-54 Percent</i>	
1952	36
1954	43
1956	47
1958	52

This trend is even more pronounced for the five of the 19 districts that went Democratic by 53-54 percent. For these the corresponding percentages are:

1952	33
1954	42
1956	49
1958	53

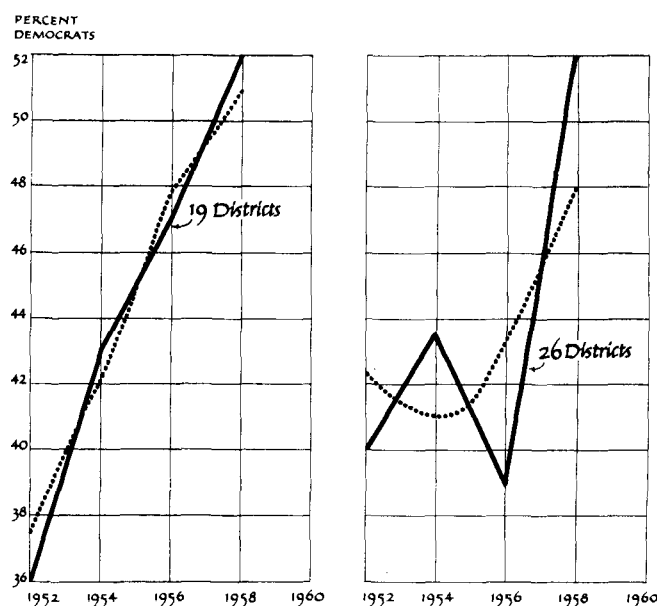
For the other 26 Democratic Congressional districts that do not show this 1952-58 trend in their favor the average Democratic percentages are as follows:

<i>26 Selected Congressional Districts</i>	
<i>Won by Democrats in 1958</i>	
<i>With 50-54 Percent</i>	
1952	40
1954	43
1956	39
1958	52

The pattern of continuous increase in Democratic strength 1952-58 was broken in these districts because of Republican gains in 1956 attributable in part to the Suez crisis just before that election. The districts of this group are centered for the most part in the Northeast quadrant of the country, whereas many of the first group of 19 districts are located in the Midwest. From this fact I draw the tentative inference that Eastern Congressional districts responded typically to an international crisis by giving more support to the party in the White House. This is the same tendency I find in two other election years, 1940 and 1916, also dominated by the prospect of international military involvement.

Even though only 19 of the 45 Democratic marginal seats are likely to benefit in 1960 from a continuation of their 1952-58 uptrend, it does not follow that all of the other 26 districts will turn Republican if this year's election produces a net Republican gain in the Congress. There is something to be said about Republican marginal districts before balancing out the Congressional prospects. The 57 Republican districts won with 50-55 percent in 1958 also differ in degrees of risk. Sixty percent of them (32 in number) were won with small Republican percentages (50-53) and 25 by a larger margin (54-55 percent).

MARGINAL CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS WON BY DEMOCRATS IN 1958 WITH 50-55 PERCENT VOTES



In about a half dozen of these marginal Republican districts the trend has been downward, and a continuation of that trend could put five of the six in the Democratic column. In addition, a somewhat larger number, 10 of the 57, need to be studied in terms of their 1956 rather than their 1958 margins. Three of the 10 were won in 1956 with 53-54 percent of the vote, the other seven with only 50-51 percent. In drawing up the balance sheet of 1960 Democratic and Republican Congressional prospects, it is important to note that these 10 Republican districts were marginal in 1956 in spite of the great advantage of the President's coat-tail influence. If on election day Nixon does not enjoy Eisenhower's 1956 popularity and there is no Suez crisis to confuse normal voting behavior, some of these Republican marginal districts can go Democratic and thus minimize the possible reduction in the present Democratic margin of control in the Congress.

In summary, 19 of 45 Democratic marginal seats are unlikely to shift in view of the strong local trend toward the Democrats from 1952-58. The other 26 could go Republican. Among the 57 Republican marginal districts, five may go Democratic because of their downward 1952-58 trend and seven others may go Democratic since they may not have as strong Presidential coat-tail support as in 1956. This admittedly is considerably less than an exact scientific method of anticipating Congressional election results. It nevertheless points to a possible net Republican gain of only about 15 Congressional seats. Like crop estimates before harvest time, this figure too is subject to revision depending on what changes in the political weather develop during the campaigning season.

THE ECONOMICS BEHIND THE PLATITUDES

A Primer on Inflation

by Robert Lekachman

To prevent steadily rising costs and prices calls for stern self-discipline by every citizen. No person, city, state, or organized group can afford to evade the obligation to resist inflation, for every American pays its crippling tax.

Personally, I do not feel that any amount can be properly called a surplus as long as the nation is in debt. I prefer to think of such an item as a reduction of our children's inherited mortgage. — President Eisenhower

The President's sermon on the economic verities in his State of the Union message prompts me to wonder what are the economics behind the platitudes.

Let us start at the very beginning. The simplest definition I know of inflation labels it as a period in which prices continuously rise. Prices, in general, rise when the total amount people want to spend on goods and services is larger than the sum of the price tags which sellers have placed on their merchandise and services. The response of happy sellers is to raise prices and eliminate poorer or less eager buyers from the competition for scarce goods. Thrift tends to slow or stop inflation because some of the possible buyers voluntarily remove themselves from the market. On the other hand, borrowing adds to the sums which buyers can spend and promotes price increases. What is true of individual consumers applies also to other spending units, including businessmen, farmers, private institutions, and governmental agencies.

As late as the early 1930s, many economists contemplated wage reductions as a means of restraining inflation. Since the ordinary wage earner is the most prone to spend a large percentage or all of his weekly income, reductions in wages might well lead to nearly equal reductions in spending. Under the influence of Keynes, rather few conservative economists now advocate such a policy. In the world of reality, trade union resistance would be overwhelming and the danger of unemployment as a corollary of wage reduction quite considerable. There are few left to point to the economic advantages of unemployment — at least in public.

More socially acceptable as a mode of monetary limitation is credit contraction. Here the story becomes

complicated. What the economist calls money falls into two major categories: paper currency and metal coins, and demand or checking deposits in commercial banks. Deposits are vastly more important than currency, comprising some four fifths of the total money supply. They are not only the largest, they are also the most volatile portion of the money supply. Although commercial bankers bristle at the imputation, it is they who have most to do with this fluctuation in the money supply. To understand their role, it is necessary to examine the manner in which loans are made. Conventionally, a commercial bank extends credit to a borrower by giving him a deposit. On this deposit, the borrower can draw by check to pay his bills. In short, the deposit is *money*. If the bank does not make the loan, the money is not created. If when the loan is repaid, the bank does not make another of the same size, the money supply contracts. Loans expand the money supply and repayments shrink the money supply.

These expansions and contractions are intensified by the circumstance that American banking is based on fractional reserve requirements. Commercial banks need keep no more than about one dollar in cash (actually as a deposit in a Federal Reserve Bank) for each \$5 in deposits. Or, what is the same point, every dollar of reserves can support \$5 of deposits, and deposits are money. Conservative economic policy concentrates its efforts on altering the size of these reserves on the assumption that larger or smaller reserves lead to expansion or contraction of loans and deposits.

The chosen instruments of this policy are the 12 Federal Reserve Banks in the major cities and the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System in Washington, as coordinator of national policy. The President appoints members of the Board to 14 year, staggered terms of office. The Federal Reserve System exercises important controls over the lending activities of the commercial banks who belong to the system. Chief among them is the ability to increase or decrease reserves — the basis of the money creating capacity of commercial banks. The Federal Reserve's three classic weapons are variations in reserve requirements, alterations in rediscount rates, and open market operations.

If commercial banks are directed to hold in reserve one dollar for every *four* instead of *five* dollars in deposits, they can adjust themselves to their new situation by refusing to renew loans when they fall due. This action extinguishes the deposits with which the loans are repaid and thus contracts the money supply. The commercial bank can put itself into an appropriate legal position in another way; instead of reducing the deposits against which it holds reserves, it can increase its reserves by borrowing from the Federal Reserve. But this action only delays the inevitable. When it comes time to pay the Federal Reserve, the commercial bank can do so only by reducing the loans which it makes to its own customers.

Moreover, borrowing from the Federal Reserve is expensive, for interest must be paid. Constitutionally, commercial bankers delight in interest paid *to* them and abominate interest paid *by* them. The Federal Reserve can increase this detestation by raising the charges it makes when commercial banks borrow reserves. These charges are called the rediscount rate. If the Federal Reserve increases reserve requirements and rediscount rates simultaneously, the pressure upon the commercial banks to contract credit is very considerable. Commercial bankers transmit this pressure to their customers by raising interest rates and thus discouraging some borrowers entirely, increasing the severity of the terms upon which loans are made, and reducing the size of individual loans. Businessmen in general discover that it is more difficult to borrow the funds they require to expand their inventories or even to maintain them at present levels in periods of rising prices. Small loan companies which conduct their affairs substantially on the basis of funds they borrow from commercial banks are compelled to accept smaller credits and pay higher rates for them. In turn, they reduce loans to consumers and make them more expensive. As the impact of higher interest rates widens, home buyers face harsher mortgage terms, and find themselves less able to contemplate monthly payments in which interest bulks large, automobile buyers postpone purchases, and businessmen of all varieties curtail their rosier visions of expansion. In short, spending diminishes, and prices stabilize or fall.

If these weapons do not suffice, the Federal Reserve has at its disposal a still more powerful technique, open market sales of government securities. Of the many billions of dollars of government securities in its possession, the Federal Reserve, acting through its Open Market Committee, can sell as much as it pleases, to whoever will buy. These marketable securities – a category quite different from the savings bonds purchased by ordinary individuals – include 91-day Treasury Bills, and a wide variety of bonds of various maturi-

ties. By its own self-denying ordinance, the Federal Reserve customarily deals only in the shortest term of these securities, a policy usually called “bills only.” When it sells these securities, it reduces deposits in commercial banks, for the corporations, banks, life insurance companies, mutual and welfare funds, and institutions which are the largest buyers of the bonds pay for them by check. The money supply declines immediately because of this deposit contraction and the ultimate effect is still greater. The Federal Reserve can always persuade buyers to purchase by reducing the price of the securities. Since the interest payment is not curtailed when the price falls, purchasers enjoy higher effective yields – the relationship between price at purchase and annual interest payments – than before the price reduction. If rational behavior in financial markets is assumed, there will always be some yield which will induce possible purchasers to prefer government securities to alternative uses of their funds, including personal consumption.

The Bankers' Preference

In general, bankers and conservative economists much prefer monetary measures of this variety to alternative forms of government intervention. For this preference, there are several reasons. Banks are conservative institutions, and bankers cast themselves as models of prudent behavior, not always with adequate justification. Conservatives are happy when prudent men, even Federal Reserve central bankers, meeting in the privacy of dignified boardrooms, are at the financial helm. The whole operation appears less like government interference and more like an extension of normal business practice. Banking action is quick, secret, easily reversible, and free of bureaucratic complications. Finally, banking regulation at least appears to interfere least with the private decisions of individual consumers and businessmen. Banking controls apparently refrain from singling out individual industries, much less individual persons for discriminatory attention. Commercial bankers are still left with the task of allocating credit among their borrowers. They simply have less credit to allocate. If, as intelligent conservatives recognize, government action is essential when either inflation or recession threatens, then banking policy is by all odds the least governmental of governmental actions.

At about this point in the exposition, the argument between liberals and conservatives begins. The major liberal criticisms of recent monetary policy, carried out after this rationale, conveniently fall under two headings, efficacy and equity. Liberals charge that the partisans of monetary policy have not kept up with the changes in financial institutions and practices which have diminished the impact of monetary policy. Thirty years ago, perhaps even 10 years ago, Federal Reserve

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policy directly affected the bulk of lending activity. For a great many reasons, this is much less the case today. Since government expenditure is much more important as a percentage of total spending than it used to be, limitation of private spending leaves untouched a major spending source. Interest costs mean much less to a businessman as a deterrent from borrowing because corporate taxes enable him to regard half the interest burden as a credit on tax payments. Commercial banks are much less important because the larger corporations tend more and more either to handle their own financing out of accumulated profits, or to borrow from life insurance companies or other institutional lenders instead of commercial banks. As the last sentence implies, other financial institutions — life insurance companies, savings and loan societies, government lending agencies, and mutual funds — have grown more rapidly than the commercial banks. None of these lenders, it should be emphasized, is subject to the control of the Federal Reserve. Since the Federal Reserve can affect directly only a diminishing percentage of potential lending, it can contract total spending much less than it once could.

The Case of the Small Borrower

Moreover — and this is the second liberal criticism — what effect it does have is only at the cost of grave inequity. For the brunt of credit limitation is suffered by the borrower who has no alternative to the loan from a commercial bank. That borrower almost inevitably is a person or an enterprise of small resources. As we have said, the large enterprise draws upon accumulated retained profits, or places its securities with some institutional investor. If, at worst, it borrows from the commercial banks, it enjoys the most favorable terms. The small borrower's case is much different. If he fails to win accommodation from a commercial bank, he must go without. Since the small borrower is likely to be a poorer risk, and he is certainly the most trouble to handle in relation to the size of the transaction, the burden of monetary contraction falls most heavily upon him. Other sufferers are consumers with low incomes. It is the man whose income is \$4,000 not his richer brother who is denied credit upon purchases of cars, refrigerators, or living room suites. This is not the end of monetary policy's inequities. The longer the time of repayment, the larger is the percentage of the value of a loan paid in interest. Major long-term borrowing concentrates on construction. This is another way of saying that state and local authorities, with no access to federal credit, can construct schools, hospitals, parks, and other public facilities only at sharply rising costs. When bond issues expand, more of them are rejected by voters, and the present misallocation of resources between public and private uses is aggravated.

As many critics view monetary policy, it is not as

effective as it once was, and it is more and more unfair. The paradox appears to be that monetary policy has been just effective enough to hamper growth, and not effective enough to contain inflationary forces.

How do recent events fit into this simplified framework? Start with the federal budget. Although there is many a slip between the prediction and the achievement, the President forecasts a budget surplus of \$4.2 billion for the fiscal year which begins July 1, 1960, and terminates June 30, 1961. Sternly and morally, he proposes to apply this sum to the reduction of our impressive \$290 billion national debt. Such a reduction will save in interest some \$200 million. Let us dispose first of the morality of budget reduction. In his reference to "our children's inherited mortgage," the President commits the logical fallacy of composition, of arguing that what is true of the parts of a whole must necessarily be true of the whole. For an individual an inherited debt is an ill, since when he repays it, he transfers assets which he might have enjoyed to the creditor.

But the case of an internally held federal debt is a great deal more complicated. In the first place, it is owned by a great many individuals — directly in the shape of savings bonds, indirectly in the form of claims in institutions which themselves are owners of federal securities, such as insurance companies, savings banks, and saving and loan associations. Not only is the debt widely held, it is widely financed, through general taxation. Therefore, who bears the burden of the debt depends upon who owns the debt and who pays the taxes which cover interest and principal. Conceivably, the owners of the debt could redeem it out of taxes they themselves pay, given the appropriate distribution of debt and taxes. It is plain that the process involves essentially internal transfers of wealth. At its end, the community is neither richer nor poorer, although some people within the country may gain and others may lose. In any event, morality is irrelevant to the issue.

Nevertheless, the size and the character of the national debt do give rise to genuine, technical problems. Here we must consider, as illustration, the President's plea for the lifting of the $4\frac{1}{4}$ percent ceiling on government bonds of five years or longer life, a restriction which he stigmatizes as an "artificial barrier" to proper debt management. The Treasury's troubles are related to the fact that most of the national debt is in short-term securities. Approximately \$84 billion of these securities will mature in 1960. In effect, the Treasury must find \$84 billion of new money to replace the sums it pays to the holders of maturing debt. As a matter of administration, this necessity is a nuisance, involving much unnecessary activity in financial markets. Worse than that, the Treasury's large refunding operations complicate the Federal Reserve's tasks of monetary management. In custom and in practice, the Federal Reserve must make money sufficiently plentiful in the

community so that the Treasury can sell its new securities issue without embarrassment. But this tradition may well coincide with a time when the Federal Reserve wishes to contract credit in order to combat inflation.

What would the Treasury like to do? If the size of the national debt were reduced, the impact of Treasury operations would diminish. Even if the size of debt remained stable, improvement would occur if when short-term securities fell due, the Treasury could replace them with long-term bonds. Such a change would decrease the number of times the Treasury had to resort to refunding operations. But, asks the Secretary of the Treasury, how can this laudable goal be attained or even approached if nobody wants to buy long-term government securities for the sound and sufficient reason that yields higher than $4\frac{1}{4}$ percent can be earned on other securities, loans, or mortgages. Because of this obsolete restriction, the Treasury must sell more and more short-term securities. When it does so, it forces short-term interest rates up both for itself and for other borrowers. As a result, long-term rates are lower and short-term rates are higher than they would be, except for the distorting effects of the Treasury's operations.

On general grounds of administrative efficiency and even economic principle the Administration case is good. Those who argue with it are not so much opposed to Treasury freedom as they are eager to accomplish another purpose: a general revision of interest-rate policy. Critics of the Administration are in effect proposing a trade – repeal of the interest-rate ceiling in return for looser credit policies by the Federal Reserve System. The heart of the matter is the independence of the Federal Reserve from Congressional influence. Congressional Democrats are convinced, with some reason, that in recent years the Federal Reserve has forced interest rates too high, intensified the difficulties of small borrowers, and created an artificial shortage of funds for public purposes. The net impact of these policies has been to inhibit growth and increase average levels of unemployment. Congressional reluctance to raise the interest ceiling is a judgment that existing rates are higher than they should be for the welfare of the society. If this is so, then allowing the Treasury to sell long-term securities is the equivalent of giving the purchasers an undeserved bonus over the lifetime of the bonds. On the other hand, if the Treasury sells short-term securities, there may come a time when it can exchange for long-term bonds, but at lower interest rates. No doubt Congress is making an economic judgment after an awkward, political fashion, but it is difficult to see what alternative it enjoys.

In his message, the President was concerned not alone with balancing the federal budget, but also with holding down its size. Orthodox conservative ideas on this subject are simple enough. Private activity, in general, is to be preferred to public activity because private activity registers individual choices and preferences in a way

that the clumsier apparatus of government cannot match. Private activity is also more efficient because it is sensitive to the stimulus of private gain. Although in complex modern societies government intervention is frequently necessary, the necessity is a source of regret not of joy. If government must intervene, let the unit be as near the voters as possible, preferably the state or the community. In pursuit of these principles, the Eisenhower Administration has proposed only timid programs of housing, school construction and urban redevelopment. In advancing toward even puny objectives, it has displayed a weakness for complex financing devices which center in the commercial banks.

Who Pays the "Crippling Tax"?

What is a possible alternative position? It is irresponsible to take the danger of inflation lightly. But inflation is dangerous not because of the President's reason, that "every American pays its crippling tax," but precisely because so many Americans do not pay "its crippling tax." Any businessman, speculator, or worker whose remuneration advances more rapidly than prices increase enjoys a benefit, although he may inflict a penalty on others whose fortune is less good. Inflation afflicts pensioners, public employees, teachers, and rentiers. If unchecked, it cripples incentives and distorts production. But it is foolish not to realize that one reason inflation occurs is that inflation is of immediate benefit to a great many Americans.

How does the budget affect the control of inflation? A budget surplus diminishes total spending by taking out of the income stream more money in taxes than it returns to that stream by its own expenditures. Hence a budget surplus tends to be anti-inflationary. Although liberals as well as conservatives can participate in the President's enthusiasm for a budget surplus at this time, such endorsement need not preclude support of expenditures on a wide range of neglected social objectives. Housing, schools, and medical services are essential to the rectification of the imbalance in our society between private affluence and public poverty. Since private markets fail to house us adequately, guard our health, or make our cities livable, government action is essential.

The logic and the arithmetic of the simultaneous pursuit of price stability and social progress amount to this: the budget should be more than balanced, and the level of federal spending on social welfare should sharply rise. The resultant of these two forces is higher taxes. At the moment, in an election year, it would take a courageous Congress to face this fact, for the feeling is still widespread that the tax reduction which former Secretary of the Treasury George Humphrey urged through Congress in 1954 created a sacred ceiling on the taxes that the community should pay. That assumption stands as a major barrier to social progress.

BOOKS AND THE ARTS

A Revival of "The Dial"

by J. M. Edelstein

The Dial is one of the oldest and most distinguished names in American magazine history. The first *Dial* was started in 1840, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, by Ralph Waldo Emerson and Margaret Fuller. In its early death four years later, in its subordination of commercial interests to altruistic principles and in its constantly high standards (which may have been the reason it never had more than 300 subscribers) this trans-

The Dial, A Magazine of Fiction,
Volume I, Number 1, Fall, 1959.

cedential journal became the prototype of the American little magazine.

In 1880, the name *Dial* was revived in Chicago with the appearance of a fortnightly book review. Quite academic in style and spirit, it was a dull periodical until the first World War when the ownership changed and it moved to New York and developed into an important literary magazine. In 1918, it was again given new form, and with editors such as Harold Stearns, John Dewey and Thorstein Veblen, *The Dial* became one of the country's responsible journals of liberal opinion, with a large circulation; it was in a category with *The New Republic* and its competitors. By the next year, however, financial and editorial difficulties again troubled the magazine and it was sold once more.

In January, 1920, a new *Dial* made its first appearance and became, for the nine years of its life, one of the most honored reviews of our time, a serious literary and critical journal, handsome in design, truly *avant-garde* in its exploration of the world of letters and of art. From 1920 to 1925, its editor was Scofield Thayer, the enigmatic, half-legendary figure who poured his wealth and his life into the magazine; he was succeeded by Marianne Moore, who stayed with the magazine until it ended in the catastrophe of 1929.

Under the Thayer-Moore editorship,

The Dial experimented widely, printing stories, poems and art reproductions and establishing itself in the forefront of contemporary literary criticism. Miss Moore, in her volume of essays, *Predictions*, has given us a charming memoir of the lively air that surrounded the bringing out of each issue:

"There was for us of the staff, whatever the impression outside a constant atmosphere of excited triumph. . . . Those of us employed at *The Dial* felt that the devisers of the organization we represented could do better than we what we were trying to do, and we shall ever feel their strength of purpose toward straightness, spontaneity, and usefulness. 'If,' as has been said, '*The Dial* had rough seas to navigate because it chose to sail uncharted zones, structure was the better tested'; and I think happily of the days when I was part of it."

There was, too, in the best little magazine tradition, a "manifesto," a statement of purpose. This did not appear, as was customary, in the first issue, but was printed in the third number of the magazine, in March, 1920:

"In the excitement of putting the issues through the press there has been little time for self-analysis; but we are conscious of a certain happiness. . . . If a magazine isn't to be simply a waste of good white paper it ought to print, with some regularity, either such work as would otherwise have to wait for years for publication, or such as would not be acceptable elsewhere."

Who did *not* write for *The Dial*? Its pages saw the first American publication of T. S. Eliot's *The Wasteland* as well as Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice* and, quite often, the poems and stories

of D. H. Lawrence. In its first year alone *The Dial* printed articles of criticism or reviews by Arthur Symons, E. E. Cummings, Van Wyck Brooks, Conrad Aiken and Paul Rosenfeld; poetry by Aiken, Maxwell Bodenheim, Alfred Kreymborg, Marianne Moore, Cummings, Ezra Pound, Hart Crane, Witter Bynner, Djuna Barnes and Carl Sandburg; stories by Arthur Schnitzler, Sherwood Anderson, James Stephens, Kenneth Burke and Manuel Komroff; and reproductions of drawings or other art forms by Charles Demuth, Cummings, Charles Burchfield, Gaston Lachaise and many more.

Now, phoenix-like, there is once more, after thirty years, a *Dial*. This time the magazine is a quarterly and bears beneath the distinguished name the subtitle "A Magazine of Fiction." During the twenties, there was no corporate connection between the magazine and the Dial Press. Now the new periodical's publisher is the Press and the Press' executive editor, James H. Silberman, is the magazine's editor. With money taken care of, the publisher's announcement of the new *Dial* (auspiciously and generously given space in *Publisher's Weekly*, the trade-journal of the book-publishing industry, under the heading of "Media") explains negatively, but succinctly how the "big trend" disposes of the other most characteristic problem of the little magazine, distribution: "The *Dial* will not be distributed on newsstands." Gone are all the headaches that stem from that middleman, the distributor; the connection is a direct one from publisher and printer to outlet, no more return copies with their high profit losses, no more big discounts, no more worries about publicity or poor circulation. There does not even have to be very large sales; bookstore placements and mailing lists will provide an adequate enough number of customers.

Gone, too, at least in this first issue of *The Dial, A Magazine of Fiction*, are the liveliness, the freshness, the sense of innovation and the presence of a point of view that have been the essence of

the serious little magazine, especially in its initial issue – qualities that *The Dial* of the twenties did have, even though it was at times much more conservative than its contemporaries and published as much criticism and reviewing as it did experimental work. In a significant survey of little magazine history, published in 1943 in *The Sewanee Review* by Charles Allen, it was shown that about 80 percent of the important American writers since 1912 had first published in the little, perhaps better called the advance-guard, magazines, and that the remaining 20 percent were left to be discovered by the commercial publishers, the big publishing houses and the large or, as sometimes called, the “quality” magazines. In general, before acceptance comes from the commercial houses and magazines, a writer must have proved himself in the little magazines; he must have proved not only that he can write well, but that he can also write profitably.

Following tradition, the new *Dial* also has an editorial statement:

“This is Volume I, Number 1 of *The Dial*, a new magazine which bears a distinguished old name – one that during the 1920’s was synonymous with works of extraordinary literary significance. The launching of the new *Dial* is accompanied by many hopes, some fears and much faith – hope that the magazine can itself contribute to the vitality of fiction, fear of the healthy kind that acknowledges the eminence of the tradition it inherits, faith that there are writers today whose potential in fiction is as great as that of the masters who preceded them.”

This first number includes six short stories as well as T. S. Eliot’s review of Joyce’s *Ulysses* reprinted from a 1923 issue of *The Dial*. Among the six writers of stories, only Richard Power is a new name on the scene; he is an Irishman, and this is his first publication in America. Power’s “The Rebels” is a simple but devastating account of the unhappy rebellion of a group of Irish schoolboys against their vicious but strangely sympathetic master. The other five stories all have a cool interest and, except for Nelson Algren’s, they all lie within a narrow range, leaving the impression that these writers have been most busy

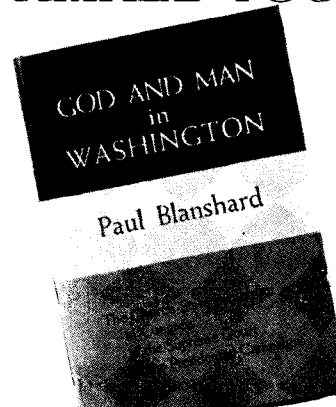
keeping up with their reading. Vance Bourjaily’s “The Poozle Dreamers,” an excerpt from *Confessions of a Spent Youth* (a novel to be published by the Dial Press) continues the story of a character named U. S. D. Quincey – a beat innocent, if such a trick is possible, who first appeared as the pseudonymous author of his own confessions in *Discovery* when Bourjaily was editing that big-little magazine. “The Poozle Dreamers” is a desperate attempt at making something lovely come alive in the description of an ugly sexual episode. I firmly believe Mr. Bourjaily when he says at the end of his story “Not Eugene Gant nor Ima Fool, not Ivan Tonowhi nor Nick Adams nor even Studs himself ever had it so sordid, so perfectly sordid.”

Philip Roth, whose collection of short stories, *Goodbye, Columbus*, was a recent well-deserved success, has written in “The Love Vessel” about the perpetual *shlemiel* for whom the littlest things are forever the biggest; he describes with sharp sensibility his hero’s awkward return to America *via* Europe after the man’s failure to make a go of it on an Israeli *kibbutz*. “Sello,” by Herbert Gold, is a depressingly obvious treatment of some of the complexities of Parisian life; but dull though this story may be, it leaves hope that Mr. Gold, a writer of talent, has left off parlaying marriage, divorce and bachelorhood into slick literature. Ellen Currie, who has published other short stories, contributes a cloying picture of the inner world of a five year old girl; the story, the longest one in the magazine, seems to be always just out-of-focus, like a landscape seen through the haze of a very hot day. The syncopated fable by Nelson Algren with the weird title, “Ding-Dong, Tinkle Hinkle, The Finkified Lasagna and the Footnote King,” is my favorite of the collection. It is completely charming and unlike anything but itself.

As for Eliot’s review of *Ulysses*, it is as striking and meaningful today as it was in 1923. It is a joy to read the masterful prose and to be reminded that “this book [is] the most important which the present age has found; it is a book to which we are all indebted, and from which none of us can escape. It is . . . a step toward making the modern world possible for art. . . .” But this is

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a famous essay and one that is readily available, if not in files of the old *Dial*, then in a collection of writings on Joyce or in a selection of Eliot's prose. I fail to see the point of including it just as I fail to understand the need for the stated policy of the Dial Press to republish in each issue "a selection from the files of the old *Dial*." Why? This is the "age of criticism." We abound in it. If "a magazine of fiction" must include articles of criticism, why not contem-

porary contributions? I believe that republishing such material is a vain gesture toward a dignified status and, perhaps, a sop for the highbrows who are supposed to be the only customers for the little magazines of an older variety. If this kind of easy way out is what is meant by acknowledging "the eminence of the tradition it inherits," this new magazine will never have anything in common with the old *Dial* except for its name.

ture, little boys with long beards will stand aside and applaud, while old men in short trousers play handball against the side of a house. . . ."

but from an early critical piece by James Joyce. It suggests that problems of anonymity and apathy; of fear of the organization and fear of the young; of the decline in mind and energy, and in the capacity for pleasure, have for long been world problems of a sort to which our own contribution has not necessarily been unique or paramount.

Most of the characters in the fiction of Joyce are other-directed and, as a matter of fact, you will find as few heap big Individualists in Zurich or Dublin or Buenos Aires, as you will find in Boston or St. Louis. Wilson adds little, then, to our understanding of "other-direction" either at home or abroad, and his opening chapter gets us off, I'm afraid, to a slow start.

It is in his next chapters, where we move from sociology to literature, that Wilson comes through best; he shows an intuitive and sympathetic understanding of those writers whom he has chosen to scold. If you share Wilson's assumption that a really big writer has to move beyond "bewilderment" you will be interested in the stunning array of "bewildered" scribes that he finds on our home front. His noting that Arthur Miller's efforts lack "intellectual fiber" won't strike you as news, but his equating of *From Here to Eternity* with an obviously soggy thing like *The Caine Mutiny* may:

"But it soon becomes apparent that the author's attitude towards the army is as favorable as Wouk's towards the navy. . . . He even seems to accept the brutality without condemnation. . . . Even Staff Sergeant Judson, one of the novel's most unpleasant characters is depicted with a detached insight that comes closely to sympathy."

I like Wilson's refusal to take such "detached insight" as a sign of the thrilling ambiguities of genius. Nor does this refusal at all get in the way of his appreciation of the book as a whole.

Wilson is in quest of the kind of temperament which resists circumstance in an exemplary way: one which knows its desires, has big ideas, and acts ac-

Is There a Hero in the House?

by T. J. Ross

No modern critic has more ably examined the implications of the heroic ideal, particularly as that ideal signifies in the situation and achievements of the writer, than the late J. M. Murry. For Murry, the heroic was the exemplary, and his chief complaint about most of the writers of his own generation was that their work was lacking in exemplary types, or heroic myths.

This pretty much, is the theme and import of Colin Wilson's new study of the

concerns with purely sociological data, and both with philosophical and religious dilemmas. Furthermore, Wilson's plea for a new post-Christian religiosity like Murry's plea for a Christian-Marxist synthesis isn't going to go down well with specialists in any one of these fields, nor will such pleas take any better with those who, like me, become as queasy at the prospect of yet another crusade for religions, new or old, as they do at the thought of a crusade for sex, or for the spreading of a general sense of "terror" or "anti-materialism" as a requisite to generally acceptable high-mindedness.

Noting accurately that "there has been no religious revival in our time" and concerned with the godless Americanization of the West which he sees in the offing, Wilson opens his discussion with a quick, over-all view of the studies of Whyte, Riesman and Packard. He finds their researches "deeply disturbing" and concludes that "America is merely ahead of Europe in the deindividualizing process." Although this conclusion echoes generally accepted opinion, I'm not sure it's accurate. I don't know that we are any more "deindividualized" here at present than Europe has been for a long while. The following for example, is not from the notebooks of an American sociologist—

"... those who succeed in spite of civilization in reaching old age seem to have less and less wisdom, and children who are usually put to some business as soon as they can walk and talk, seem to have more 'common sense'; and, perhaps in the fu-

The Stature of Man
by Colin Wilson
(Houghton Mifflin; \$3)

post-modernist scene. In making his own complaint about "the cult of the ordinary chap" and the "fallacy of insignificance," Wilson employs all of the terms Murry liked to use—"mystical," "metaphysical," "vision," "intensity," "terror"—plus one new term: "existential," and like Murry he seems at times to use these terms in a mystifyingly interchangeable manner. And Wilson also freely interlinks literary

"THE OUTCOME of the steel strike relates directly to the generic irresolution of the American people—of which Modern Republicanism is the best expression. It is one thing to have a Truman, or even a J. K. Galbraith egg on the inflationists—a Truman simply doesn't understand; a Galbraith wants to play with inflation, as the sorcerer's apprentice wanted to play with magic; and there's nothing to do but wait until the hubris subsides. But with the Eisenhower Administration it is a case of pure and simple political sloth."

From the current issue of NATIONAL REVIEW. Write to Dept. N-2, 150 E. 35 St., New York 16, N. Y., for free copy.



cordingly – the temperament, that is, of an artful dodger with a high moral vision. He hasn't found this type in the life-studies of the sociologists, nor in current Anglo-American fiction, nor in the Beats, whom he finds to be symptomatic rather than heroic – a "reflex action," at best.

Nor do the Old Masters of modernism, whom he deals with in his concluding sections provide the super-myth he seeks, nor Sartre, for "their vision of freedom . . . is distant and nostalgic. This leads to a neo-stoic position."

One notes that Wilson ignores the heroic modernist achievements in Form; but, for a prophet, form is never enough. Thus, Wilson seeks in art-works a "system of practical beliefs" and guiding examples of "fruitful individualism." In an essay, "Beyond the Outsider,"

Wilson went so far as to say that "artist and law-giver" must become one. This is indeed wrong-headed and I suspect the difficulty lies in Wilson's equation of the psychology of the writer with the psychology of Everyman. The notion of imposing upon art the burden for "a system of practical beliefs" seems equally false; yet Murry, in fact, looked to art in this way, and if his was a false insistence it nonetheless led to valuable finds. In turning away from "squir-mers," Murry and his circle found the Russian novel and, in consequence, invented the Russian Soul. It was an English Soul, really, suited to the psychic needs of the twenties – which fact didn't make it any less a fine Soul to have had around at a particular moment in cultural history. Wilson's "Outsider" may represent a comparable strike.

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THE CAMPAIGN AND ITS LITERATURE

Two for the Road

If you can take it laid on with a trowel – and if you can't you shouldn't read campaign biographies – you will find a superior example of the type in Paul I. Wellman's book (*Stuart Symington, Portrait of a Man with a Mission* – Doubleday; \$3.95). Three things, at least, it does for Symington: it demolishes the canard that would make him a Jimmie Walker play-boy; it proves that he is a smart operator on his own, and not a wood-carving by Truman; and it gives him credit for one fine idea aside from building up the Air Force.

None of these is a goose-grease operation. Each is amply documented and sustained by the record. Symington, long on family but very short on cash in his boyhood, came up through genteel poverty, the toughest kind. Starting at the bottom as a manual laborer, he became a doctor of sick industries, and made a good deal of money at it. It seems to have been chance, rather than shrewd planning, that the ailing corporation he had on his hands in 1941 was one that could be quickly turned from making refrigerators to making gun-turrets for military planes; but it was so and by the time Germany surrendered, Stuart Symington had a plant that was

worth an enormous amount of money.

Then, before Japan went down, President Truman summoned him to Washington to become disposer of surplus property, a job that all his friends told him was "the graveyard of reputations." In order to come in with clean hands Symington promptly sold everything he had in the world and put the money either into government bonds or into trust funds, so that no company in which he was interested could profit through deals with his office. Instead of going to jail, he came out with such a good name that Truman put him successively on five other mean jobs and he handled them all with great competence.

Then in 1952, instead of going back into business, he took the hair-raising gamble of running for the Senate, thereby catching Truman in a split stick, since the President was already committed to an old war-horse named Taylor. But Symington polished off Taylor in the primary, and then dished up the extreme right-wing Republican Senator James Kem at the moment when Eisenhower was sweeping the country. After that, in 1958 his re-election was a shoo-in, and now, of course, he has Harry Truman solidly behind him.

In Washington Senator Symington became, as all the world knows, a leading Congressional specialist on national defense; but Wellman reminds us that he also made a vigorous, if vain, effort to establish an academy for officers of the foreign service comparable, educationally, to West Point and Annapolis for officers of the armed forces. He is not, as his enemies say, a one-idea man.

All this is presented lucidly, smoothly, and persuasively, and Mr. Wellman loudly asserts that it qualifies Stuart

Symington for the Presidency. Maybe.

Every realistic political observer has known for years that G. Mennen Williams, Governor of Michigan, plays politics with the cards stacked against him. This is due to the rotten borough system that gives to vast, desolate areas of pine stumps legislative representation denied to populous cities. Now Frank McNaughton attempts to prove in a campaign biography (*Mennen Williams of Michigan: Fighter for Prog-*

ress—Oceana; \$3.50) that the situation explains practically every objection brought against Governor Williams as a political leader.

He does pretty well, too. One reason for his effectiveness is that he is too wise to deny or to minimize Williams' alliance with Walter Reuther. They joined forces, he says, because they were both enemies of the unfragrant Jimmy Hoffa, boss of the Teamsters' Union; and they have stuck together because they were otherwise pretty much in agreement on economic and social policies.

This is, of course, an *ex parte* presentation. It is the case for Williams and there is inevitably another side; but with all due allowance for that, the case remains strong. Williams' so-called radicalism proves to be what in other states is regarded as a rather mild liberalism—social security, school building, civilizing the prisons and insane asylums, and efforts, thus far vain, to renovate medieval systems of taxation and representation.

The weakness of the book is an emphasis on Williams' religious faith so heavy that it creates a suspicion of fanaticism, a suspicion reinforced by the existing chaos in the state's fiscal policy, the outcome of a firmness that may be construed as mulishness on both sides. On the face of the facts as here presented, Governor Williams is plainly in the right; but the nation has known men who were right in ways so wrong that their virtues were disastrous. For national leadership this is a grave disqualification. Ordinarily one does not expect to find extreme rigidity in an Episcopalian; but, after all, there was Laud.

GERALD W. JOHNSON

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

J. M. Edelstein is a young poet and a scholar in the field of American letters. He lives in Washington, D. C., where he is engaged in literary research. T. J. Ross is on the English faculty of Wayne State University. He has written extensively about the younger generation of British writers. Gerald W. Johnson's column, *The Campaign and Its Literature*, will be a feature of this journal during the months ahead. The first of the series appeared in the January 25 issue.

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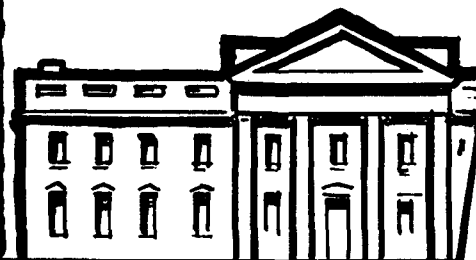
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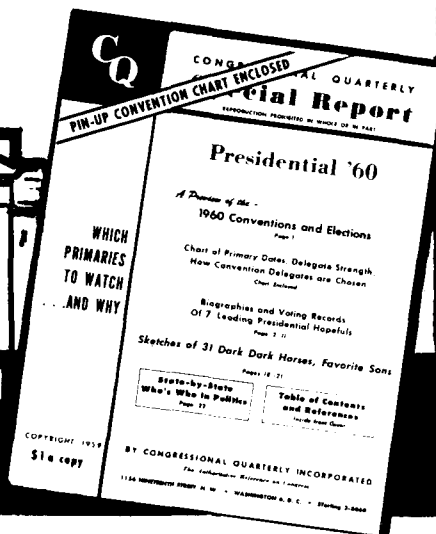
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THEATER

What's Wrong with the Phoenix

The intentions of the Phoenix company, which aspires to create a repertory of "time-honored and modern classics," are lofty and honorable, but their productions this year have overwhelmed me with fatigue, impatience, and gloom. My anguished imagination is now subject to a fearful hallucination in which I see the finest works of the greatest dramatists strewn about the Phoenix stage like so many violated corpses, while a chorus of newspaper reviewers

Peer Gynt
by Hendrik Ibsen
(Phoenix Theater)

gleefully sings dirges in the wings. Perhaps it is unfair to blame anyone but the reviewers themselves for the absurdities they write about Aristophanes and Ibsen; certainly, journalists — occupied with exalting the present — have always been inclined to knock the past. Yet, it cannot be denied that the Phoenix has provided a generous supply of corks for this pop-gun fusillade.

For it seems to me that the Phoenix, while outwardly more deferential towards the past than the reviewers, is inwardly just as indifferent to it. Instead of letting these plays stand on their own legs, the company's policy is to hale them into the 20th Century by the nearest available appendages. In *Lysistrata*, this resulted in an extremely painful attempt at topicality. (A collection of pneumatic females chanted "Sex Almighty, Aphrodite, rah, rah, rah!") In *Peer Gynt*, the effort is less clumsy but no less obfuscating — a varnish of "theatrical values" is spread thickly over the surface of the play. The Phoenix production never betrays the slightest hint that *Peer Gynt* has an intellectual content, a consistent theme, or, for that matter, any interest at all beyond a histrionic sweep. Stuart Vaughan, the director, has staged the mad scene, for example, as a frenetic phantasmagoria which is quite chilling in its effect, but one has not the vaguest idea what such a scene is doing in the play. With the directorial emphasis on

stage effects, crowd scenes, and occasional "Method" touches in the relations between characters, what was conceived as a masterful play of ideas emerges as just another stage piece, and a pretty boring one at that.

But *Peer Gynt's* claim to "classical" stature does not rest on the fact that it provides fat parts for actors, compelling scenes, or the opportunity for designers, directors, and technicians to display their wares; nor is the play particularly distinguished by any profound psychological insights. Considered strictly as *theater* (a word which is coming to mean the very opposite of *drama*), the play undoubtedly has severe defects, especially in form. But like all great works, *Peer Gynt* survives it because it is larger than its *personae* or its effects, and because what it has to say about the nature of existence remains both wide and deep.

In fact, *Peer Gynt*, written almost a hundred years ago, tells us more about our own condition than almost anything written in America in recent years, for Peer's concern with Self is one of the central problems of our national life. A fanciful storyteller with a prancing imagination, Peer might have developed into a great man, but he is too absorbed in appearances to become anything more than a great illusionist. As rapist, as honorary troll, as slave trader, as entrepreneur, as prophet, he is the incarnation of compromise, the spirit of accommodation, the apotheosis of the middle way. He whirls giddily around the globe, justifying his absolute lack of conviction and principle with the protest that he is being true to himself. The inevitable conclusion to this maniacal egotism is insanity, and it is in the madhouse that Peer is crowned Emperor. Neither saint nor sinner, Peer finally learns he has been a worthless non-entity who existed only in the love of a faithful wife, and at the end of the play he is waiting to be melted down, like all useless things, by the Button Molder. "He who forfeits his calling, forfeits his right to live," wrote Kierkegaard, who believed — like Ibsen — that careerist

self-absorption and mindless self-seeking are the most monstrous waste of life. Or, to put it as the Button Molder puts it to Peer: "To be yourself, you must slay yourself."

"To be yourself is to kill the worst and therefore to bring out the best in yourself," is the way the passage reads in the Phoenix production, which will give you some idea how easily a profundity can become a copybook maxim. But although Norman Ginsbury's doggerel, inaccurate rendering makes William Archer's Victorian bromides seem sublime and precise, the adaptor is not exclusively to blame for the general amorphousness of the evening. Stuart Vaughan's cutting seems almost designed to make the work incomprehensible, and the central roles are all pretty well miscast. If the Phoenix were a true repertory company, Fritz Weaver would have been ideally placed in the part of the Button Molder; since it is not, he plays the leading role. A heroic actor with a fine gift for irony, Weaver begins to make some sense when Peer gets older; but his heavy style is inappropriate to the younger, quicksilver Peer who is turned into an earthbound swain with a clumsy pair of hooves.

In brief, we must be grateful to the Phoenix for wanting to mount this play, at the same time wondering what the animating impulse was to do so. In the past, the Phoenix had no other policy other than to survive; today, its brochure speaks of creating a "new tradition in the theater." But since the Phoenix has developed no new methods of staging, no new methods of playing, no new interpretative approach, I am puzzled about what this new tradition will be. There seems to be an authentic desire, as yet unrealized, to create a "working, professional group that can grow as a unit," but we have yet to see any sign that the "time-honored and modern classics" will function as anything more than showcases for the company. Alas, the trouble with the Phoenix is the trouble with the American theater at large; isolated within its theater walls, it shows no willingness to abandon itself to any purpose higher than its own existence. In this regard, Ibsen's play remains a cogent lesson; for if the American theater is ever to be a place for art, it must learn to slay itself.

ROBERT BRUSTEIN

Correspondence

The New Republic welcomes communications in regard to subjects of current interest. Those of 300 words or less are most suitable for publication.

The Hour We Live In

Sirs:

In preparation for an article on Lillian Smith, I made a study of some two hundred reviews of her new novel, *One Hour*. Before commenting on certain anomalies in Leslie Fiedler's review (January 4) may I indicate briefly some of my findings?

I was struck by the peculiarly emotional tone of the reviews, and the benumbing effect this novel had upon the critical acumen of those who wrote them. Seldom did a review give any indication of the nature, scope, depth, symbolism, style or artistic worth of *One Hour*. Only three reviewers compared it with any other contemporary novel, or stated that they thought Lillian Smith either more or less important, talented, wise, perceptive than some other mid-20th Century author. Those who wanted to share their delight

were content, by and large, to urge others to read the book. Those who wanted to shield their readers from Lillian Smith's view of the hour we live in, came up with an amazing assortment of reasons why the book itself should not be opened: it is too sexy (*Newsweek*); not up to Dostoevsky (*New Yorker*); its conception is greater than its accomplishment (*Saturday Review*); its characters are too interested in books, art, music (this was the "reason" most frequently given by Northern reviewers, who are not ready, apparently, to give up their stereotype of a South made up of Tobacco Road or magnolias); the minister, the artist and the scientist are perverts and the mob should have got them all (a Charleston daily which was one among very few Southern papers condemning this book).

And now your review, after three months of rumination... has a new gimmick. Don't read this book, Mr. Fiedler says, for it is not what Ezra Pound would write if he wrote a novel. Mr. Fiedler handsomely concedes that *One Hour* is "the embodiment of all that is socially, even ethically admirable in latter-day liberalism"; but since, with Pound, he believes that "liberal humanism is a beautiful lie based on other even more beautiful and hoary lies" he

shoots the works and warns his readers against all writers who show existential concern for man in his eternally precarious search for meaning.

Had Mr. Fiedler bothered to read *One Hour*, instead of using it as a springboard for his nihilistic thesis, he would have seen that Dave also learned the hollowness of being a "good guy" (a term which, as used in this book, roughly equates with Mr. Fiedler's "liberal humanist") and felt the inadequacy of all his culture and his own predilections had taught him to prize, when he and those he loved faced their time of challenge and renunciation and bereavement. It was Dave who packed the books away—including Ezra Pound's and his betters'—and saw that an era had ended. It was Dave who said that the wisdom of the great past, and of late decades, cannot hold sufficient meaning for us unless we have the courage and dedication to seek new symbols in which to convey both old and new truths to a generation whose universe is falling apart.

A cursory reading of this novel would also show that eight-year-old Susan—with her mercurial charm and pathetic, persistent search for her lost and rightful heritage of love and human understanding—was explicitly removed from

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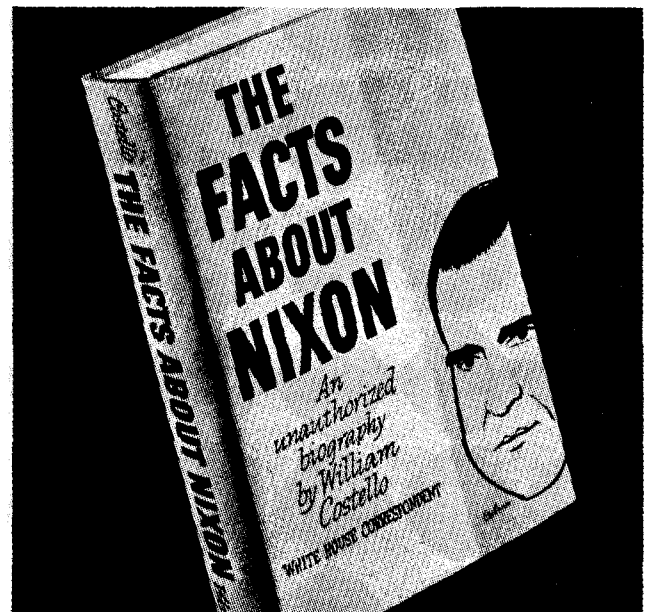
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the role of villain, even in the eyes of the narrator Dave. But Mr. Fiedler's first fallacy is in equating young Dave's philosophy and vantage point on life with those of the author—a woman whose personality, age, vision, ordeals, undeviating courage under fire, cause her to know, more deeply and painfully than a "moderate" such as Dave would likely ever discover, that the villain in today's world is dehumanized man: the pervasive eight-year-old mentality; the augmented, anonymous power of mobman to trample any heart more tender than his own.

A minor point before ending: If Mr. Fiedler thinks that "liberalism" was an unqualified honorific below the Mason and Dixon Line in 1944 (or is in 1960), then "naïve" is a word more aptly to be applied to him than to the author of *Strange Fruit*. . . . Since Mr. Fiedler shows himself here as having been twice bemused by the wiles of fiction, may I suggest that he read Miss Smith's *Killers of the Dream* (1949). If he actually prizes truth and the courage to seek it out, to express it unequivocally and movingly, and to bear the consequences of so doing, he will find food for much thinking and rethinking in this autobiographical and cultural analysis. And certain of his conceptions regarding Miss Smith's philosophy and her "education" will then be in accord with the facts; though probably not more palatable to him.

His basic complaint against Lillian Smith is that she believes that Man, the time-binding animal, the unique wielder of symbols, the dreamer no less than the killer of dreams, can do something about his own future; or, as Mr. Fiedler so neatly sums it up, that she stands convicted of the sin of "passionate affirmation."

Paula Snelling
Clayton, Georgia

What About Bowles?

Sirs:

Your editorial (January 11) inviting attention to the presidential qualifications of Chester Bowles was a notable public service. While some of the signers of this letter regard Adlai Stevenson as the ablest horse in the Democratic stable, all of us regard Mr. Bowles as an outstanding prospect. Judged by criteria of intelligence, experience, energy, vision,

courage, political skill and potential public appeal, Bowles seems to meet the presidential test. Our congratulations for a first-rate editorial which may have historic importance.

Reo M. Christenson
Herbert Waltzer
Hans H. Baerwald
Howard White
Dan N. Jacobs
Joseph E. Black
Department of Government
Miami University
Oxford, Ohio

Sirs:

Conditions in the world at large and in the United States very strongly demand that we have not only fair but really intelligent leadership of the first order in the President we elect this fall. Over the years Chester Bowles has evidenced a very keen mind that quickly reaches the right conclusions. Please keep up the good work of boosting Chester Bowles. He has not evidenced any weakness anywhere and would be ideal.

Robert B. Stewart
Arvada, Colorado

The Un-American Activities Committee

Sirs:

Last year the House Un-American Activities Committee received a grant of \$300,000 for its work. Now there is up for consideration H.R. 413, calling for a grant of \$300,000 for the rest of the year. In addition, H.R. 414 introduced by Chairman Walter asks for additional funds for publication of a document—*The Crimes of Khrushchev*. These requests have been referred to the House Administration Committee of which Omar Bureson is Chairman.

Projected publication of *The Crimes of Khrushchev* is clearly an effort to poison the atmosphere surrounding the forthcoming summit conferences and handicap President Eisenhower when he makes his planned visit to the Soviet Union. Letters or telegrams must go at once to Mr. Bureson, demanding open hearings on H.R. 413 and H.R. 414. If public opinion does not compel these hearings we shall once again be helpless to arrest the work of the Un-American Activities Committee.

Muriel I. Symington
Brooklyn, N. Y.

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